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INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 002444

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/13/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: GAZA VIOLENCE AND WEST BANK UNREST CONTINUE

REF: JERUSALEM 02399

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) SUMMARY: Fatah-Hamas violence continued in Gaza June 14, resulting in the death of a Hamas activist and the wounding of a Preventive Security Organization (PSO) official in Khan Yunis. President Mahmud Abbas condemned the June 13 Israeli air strike in Gaza that killed 11 Palestinians, including eight civilians. Palestinian protests in Gaza against the air strike resulted in two Palestinian injuries. In the West Bank, Hamas and Fatah supporters participated in demonstrations in Ramallah, Nablus, and Hebron. There were no injuries reported, though there were some reports of property damage. Palestinian civil servants June 14 stormed the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) building in Ramallah, threatened Hamas PLC members, and demanded payment of salaries. On June 13, Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades representatives claimed responsibility for a shooting near JerQalem earlier in the day that injured one Israeli security guard. END SUMMARY.

PSO CHIEF SHOT; HAMAS MEMBER KILLED IN GAZA

2. (C) The PSO commander in charge of Khan Yunis, Rifat Kulab, was shot and wounded June 14 by two gunmen reportedly affiliated with Hamas. According to Fatah sources, Kulab's bodyguard returned fire, killing one Hamas gunman. Hamas spokesmen accused Kulab's bodyguards of provoking the incident after Hamas Special Security Forces (SSF) attempted to stop Kulab's car. Sources in the President's office told ConGen POL FSN that Hamas gunmen subsequently attacked Kulab's house and set it on fire. No injuries were reported.

REACTION TO GAZA AIR STRIKE

3. (C) President Abbas issued a statement on June 13 condemning an Israeli air strike earlier in the day that killed 11 Palestinians, including three Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) members, three children, and four health care workers. In a related development, three Palestinian militant groups (the Martyr Abu-Ali Mustafa Brigades, the al-Aqsa Martyrs, Brigades, and the National Resistance Brigades) issued a statement claiming responsibility for three rockets launched at an Israeli military base near Gaza. The statement said they launched the rockets in response to the Israeli air strike.

WEST BANK UNREST

¶4. (C) In Ramallah, PA security forces opened fire at a car that failed to stop at a PA police checkpoint. The driver, a Palestinian from the al-Amari refugee camp, was killed in the shooting. Following the incident, dozens of gunmen from the camp took to the streets of Ramallah, destroying some traffic lights, and causing damage to buildings and restaurants. The PA security forces did not confront the protestors. (Note: This incident is apparently unrelated to the ongoing Fatah-Hamas conflict. End note.)

¶5. (C) In Nablus, approximately three thousand Hamas supporters demonstrated in the city against the June 12 attacks in Ramallah and other parts of the West Bank (reftel). In Jenin, however, hundreds of Fatah armed men demonstrated against the Hamas government. There were no violent clashes in either of those demonstrations. Thousands of Hamas supporters also protested in Hebron. The participants condemned the June 12 attacks against the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), and demanded that immediate action be taken to protect the government installations.

¶6. (C) According to Fatah sources and the media, approximately 120 Palestinian civil servants and Fatah members June 14 stormed a session of the PLC in Ramallah to demand payment of salaries. The protestors reportedly damaged some of the equipment in the hall and verbally attacked Hamas PLC members. PLC Speaker Aziz Dweik adjourned the session and called on the protestors to leave the building. The protestors dispersed about one hour later, following the intervention of Fatah members. Following the resumption of the session, Dweik scheduled a special session of the PLC on June 19 to discuss the non-payment of civil servant salaries.

CHECKPOINT SHOOTING

¶8. (C) Al-Aqsa Martyrs, Brigades issued a press statement on June 13, claiming responsibility for the shooting of an Israeli security guard near the Atarot (north of Jerusalem) crossing point earlier in the day (reftel). The security guard was lightly wounded in the attack.

WALLES